1:Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF16 SW China AF16
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668 The cadre carries on the continuing effort to destroy traditional mores, which are prime resistants in what the Communist call the long and difficult process of ideological and social reform. He publicizes the new marriage law, discourages or prevents arranged marriages, lectures on sanitation, and, sometimes with the help of radio, films, and mobile theatrical units, dramatizes the issues of the day, the need for the farmer to sacrifice, to send his sons to the army, to contribute labor to community projects, to inform on his neighbors, to buy bonds, and so forth. The cadre establishes "winter schools" in which the peasants are given intensive political indoctrination, practical training, and instruction in reading and writing. Hunan reported that 2,500,000 peasants were enrolled in these schools in the winter of 1955.[19]

•556 668 The age-old drive of the vigorous peasant to increase his family's land holdings is checked by fear lest he be re-classified as a "rich peasant" and be subject to higher taxes and other pressures. Yet what the Communists deplore as the peasant's "spontaneous capitalistic tendency" has not been crushed,

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19. People's Daily, Jan. 30, 1955; SCMP 984, pp. 30-31.

1;Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF16 SW China AF16
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and the landholdings of the more enterprising grow in size.[20]

The effort to force various forms of co-operative work has not been completely successful:

> "...when a serious team-use of labor, tools, and farm animals was attempted, a variety of unsatisfactory results emerged; quarrels among the families interfered with efficient output; no one assumed responsibility for the upkeep of communal property; the claims of inefficient members violated the sense of equity of the more efficient..."[21]

Yet the villagers' way of life has been greatly altered by the intervention of the government, through the cadres, in all social, economic, and political activities. The pressure to conform, at least outwardly, is formidable. Self-chosen leisure-time activities are few, meetings occupy a great deal of time, and attendance at harangues by Party cadres, entertainment furnished by traveling theatrical groups (all with their ideological message) take more of his leisure. The slack winter season may now find him in winter school or

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20. Rostow, op. cit., p. 152, cites the Peking People's Daily, Feb. 13, 1954.

21. Rostow, op. cit., p. 84.

769 Ancestor worship is institutionalized to an amazing extent. Not only the very large and wealthy families and clans but also the ordinary well-to-do ones have a separate ancestral temple. All go to great lengths and expenses to ensure good sites for family graveyards according to geomancy. In order to make sure that the fortune of the family will be on the up all the time it is the custom to change graveyards to new sites when the old ones have become suspect. Old imperial honors granted from Peking have been and are still highly valued. Walking through the town and its villages one senses upon numerous plaques of honor on the portals to many family homes.

249 Not many years ago, before the advent of the power of the Central Government into the province, opium growing was general. George B. Cressey prints in his book, China's Geographical Foundations (1934) a photograph showing "Fields of Opium Poppy Outside the Walls of Yunnanfu" (Kunming). This sight is no longer common today, especially in the more communicable parts. In the remoter interior of the province, the author has been told, opium is still being grown. Opium smoking is certainly very widespread everywhere in the province. Opium-growing in this town and its satellite villages was formerly the source of income for many families, and the trading of the commodity has enabled many families to become wealthy, indeed. The prohibition of its plantation has caused many small farmers to sigh about the passed "golden ago," but has not prevented the wealthy families from making even more profit out of the now scarcer supply. These facts have at least been partly responsible for the wealth of West Town.

556 West Town contains a disporportionately large number of wealthy families. These families are not mere local stars. They are rather outstanding even in the larger provincial cities and in Kunming. One year ago the top of these families performed a funeral that lasted over two months and cost about one million national dollars. Even the lesser ones are also considerable. Soon after the fabulous funeral the wedding of the young master of a small one-room cloth store in the town cost ten thousand national dollars while the wages of laborers in the town were still about two or three dollars a day with board.

556 178 743 871 This wealth has perhaps given rise to the over-emphasis on the ancient ways as regards imperial honors, ancestor worship and sexual differences. But in recent years a few wealthy families have also supported in the town three schools, a hospital and a public library. The hospital has about twenty beds, one graduate nurse, two medical officers (both M.D.'s, one was trained in Peiping Union Medical College), a number of assistant nurses and a nursing training class. It has arrangement for free medicine and hospitalization for the poor. The schools are: one middle school, one primary school divided into two parts, and one normal school. The three schools combined have a total enrollment of about 1,400. The first and second schools are co-educational. The principal of the middle school is a local man who has studied in Ts'ing Hua University, Peiping.

Influences from Outside

491 492 205 Before the days of the Burma Road, motor transportation was scarcely known to this region and communication with Kunming took about two or three weeks one way. After the opening of the Burma Road the town was soon connected with the Road by a sort of badly constructed highway. But the principal mode of travelling is still pack horses and "chairs" (Hua Kan). Since about two years ago there has been a third-class post office receiving mail from Kunming once in two days.

751 796 line to an amazing extent. The author had spoken to many local persons about these prayer meetings, in the beginning of the epidemic as well as after it was over. Not a single adult had any difficulty at all in grasping what was being asked about after the simplest possible reference was made.

In the above list two kinds of officers need a special word. First, the two officers who are in charge of Worshipping on the Altar. These are volunteers who take turns to kneel in front of the gods on the altar during the entire period of the priests' ritual activities. The man on such a duty holds with both of his hands in front of him a special incense bowl containing burning incense powder. In most meetings the duty falls on elderly people who are in the locality all the time. In the Area I, one of these officers was a clerk from the branch office of a governmentally owned savings bank in Paosham, about 200 kilometers southwest of West Town on the Burma Road. He does not stay home normally. The idea is that he who is on this duty represents the community to show the gods the people's earnestness and sincerity in their appeal.

Secondly, from the latter part of the list it will be clear that there is some feasting. In regular prayer meetings of the community (for example on one of the birthdays of gods) the feasting is usually participated in by all members of the community who have joined the meeting. But in the cholera prayer meetings there is much less feasting. The priests and the music players have to be lavishly fed. So must be most of the volunteer officers. To visitors from this or other areas is served hot tea. Some of the volunteer tea-servers are pupils of the local middle school whose homes are located in the area in which the particular meeting had taken place.

On the walls near all such meetings, and in some cases on the walls of the entire area, are square posters of yellow paper with eight characters in red: "Pray and abstain from evils with all sincerity, clean up and avoid dirt absolutely." At the entrance to the larger prayer meetings, or at the ends of the street leading to them, are large couplets showing that good deeds and earnestness are essential for mobilizing the gods, or that the prayer meetings are a collective effort to propitiate the gods who may decide to forgive sins previously committed by the community.

2. Cost of the Prayer Meetings

556 796 In all the prayer meetings expenses are met by voluntary contributions. The managers send out emissaries to solicit contributions, but a large proportion of the contributors send their contributions in money or in kind before being asked at all. Generally within a local area everybody knows what everybody else is worth, and the contributions are as a general rule proportionate to one's ability to contribute. Sometimes social position in the locality determines the amount one contributes. When the meeting is over the income, with a detailed list of the names of contributors and amounts they have contributed, and expenditures are posted in a public place. Usually the list puts the larger contributor's names first, but again social position of the contributor may be the first consideration. A person's name may appear in the lists of contributors of several prayer meetings just as it may appear in the lists of officers of several prayer meetings. This is either because the person owns shops or houses in the several areas or because his social prestige is important to the success of the meetings in question. In some cases the sum of contribution does not seem to be related at all to the contributor's social position

or to his wealth as compared with others in the same area. Thus two coffin-shop owners in one area (Area E) contributed between them a sum of two thousand and five hundred dollars and are the biggest contributors of the area. The reason is that they have suddenly made a lot of money through the epidemic. In order to make other people feel better and their newly acquired wealth more secure, they deem it best to give generously first to the popular cause. 556 796

There are others who refuse to contribute. These do not openly say that they disbelieve the cause but simply play a game of delayed action until the solicitors are tired of them. In none of the local areas is the proportion of such individuals large, and as far as the author is aware in only three areas are they found at all.

Then as to the actual cost of these meetings. The one meeting which cost the biggest sum took place at the center of the town (Area E). The sum is, in round numbers, fourteen thousand and nine hundred national dollars. The one which cost the least took place in Area B. The sum is about one hundred national dollars. The total publicly announced expenditure for nineteen meetings amounts to about $43,175. NC. 796

In order to realize the significance or insignificance of this figure it will be necessary to compare it with other figures on financial matters in the community. The average monthly expenditure of a family of three to eleven individuals was, according to a graduate from the refugee missionary college, about one hundred and twenty-five national dollars in the first half of 1940. Using this as a basis, when the rise of prices is taken into consideration, the corresponding amount in the first half of 1942 (when the cholera prayer meetings took place) should be from $548. to $1,096. (both in national currency).(7) It is thus clear that the amount expended on cholera prayers in 1942 would represent the average monthly expenditure of from 39 to 79 families of the locality. It is to be pointed out that, although the locality contains some outstandingly wealthy families which could afford to expend thirty thousand or a million dollars for a funeral the largest individual donation in these prayer meetings that came to the author's notice is two thousand and four hundred dollars. This means that the major part of the funds comes not from a few families but from many families.

On the other side of the picture we may mention that at no time had West Town's populace contributed more than one-fifth of the amount expended

(7) According to An Tze-ming: General Conditions of Economic Conditions in West Town (B.A. thesis, 1940), p. 120, 140 and 141. The number of sample families taken is small, so that the average on the expenditure is bound to be questionable. The figure $250.00 monthly is an impression rather than hard statistical fact. Taking 1936 price as 100, the price for the first half of 1940 was 1,848.38 (p. 141, ibid.), and for the first half of 1942, 8,060 to 16,120. Therefore the average monthly expenditure for the families for the first half of 1942 should be as stated in the text. (The sums are obtained by the following formula: (1) 250:1,848 = X:8,060, or (2) 250:1, 848 = X:16,120). One of the author's students in the same college (Mr. Hu Ju-hwai) had made a study of all butchers' families in West Town (May, 1942) and has found that most butchers smoke opium and their average family expenditure about doubles the results of the above calculation. However, this last mentioned study is based upon a special trade. The cost of opium may also have largely been responsible for the much larger average monthly expenditure. No definite conclusion can be drawn from it.

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reading of sacred scriptures can keep it away?" "The prayer meetings can clean up the locality" (never mentioned a word about the ghosts or spirits). The author then intentionally echoed in a very affirmative tone: "Of course, the prayer meetings have cleared up the epidemic." Upon hearing this the old man instantly responded: "But all these are simply superstitions." (a-gain Mr Hsin, the modern Chinese translation of the term). The author then explained to him, following Malinowski, that the true effect of these prayers might be to stabilize the community during a crisis, in which case they would have their proper function. He made no comment on the author's explanation. It might be that he failed to comprehend what was being said. It might also be that he understood it but did not know how to reply properly. But he simply went on to say that the meetings were "affairs" of the community, and as a personality of standing in the community he had to patronize them. He also mentioned that the community had this sort of prayer meetings on a large scale only once before, in the seventh year of the Republic (about twenty-three years ago) when another Wen broke out (not cholera, but headache and vomiting). This old man contributed twenty dollars to one prayer meeting and twenty-five dollars to another. (He is not at all wealthy.) He headed the list of directors in the prayer meeting which took place at Area H (center of the town) in which the highest single donation was $2,400.

This class of persons generally express, in one way or another, that they feel happier if they participate in the "affairs" of the community in the proper manner, whatever the outsider thinks about these "affairs". To this class also evidently belong some outstanding citizens of wealth in this community. The L. family, e.g. which is the chief supporter of the hospital and the middle school and the sole owner of the public library, spent over a million dollars for a pompous funeral in the traditional style and was the largest single contributor in at least two prayer meetings (one of which took place at the center of West Town). The R., another wealthy family, is also very much in the same position. A most interesting fact was observed in connection with a certain U. family which used to be the sixth or seventh wealthy family of the locality but which has been going down hill for some time. In a conversation Mrs. U. told the author that her family contributed five hundred national dollars to the cost of the prayer meeting in her street (Area E). But on examination of the list of contributors the author found that her husband's name was only associated with the insignificant sum of one hundred national dollars among donators of much larger sums.

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Incidents such as the last reveal that support lent to the prayer meetings is primarily a matter of social prestige, and the individual or family that has not been able to keep up with the expected level feels very much embarrassed.

An analysis of the conditions of these informants gives no definite impression as regards the significance of their age. The author had at first expected to find older people more conservative about the prayer meetings, giving more details, and the younger ones less so. This expectation is not met by the data. It is true that, as stated before, the elders and older people are in charge of the direction-managing and worshipping duties in practically all the prayer meetings. An inspection of some of the prayer meetings in session will also tell us that the spectators standing or sitting about the places of meeting during most hours of the day are either older people or children or older women. But such phenomenon is perhaps natural enough. The middle-aged or other able-bodied men and women have their work in shops, fields, and at home.